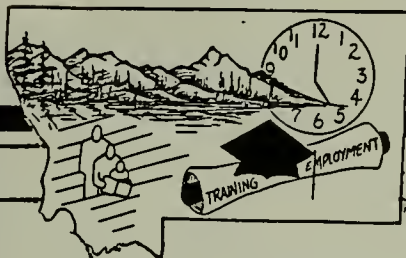


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"Families Achieving Independence In Montana"

FAIM NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 4

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WINTER 1995

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JUST THE BEGINNING

Roger La Voie
Administrator, Family Assistance Division



Now that we are about to implement welfare reform in Montana, it would appear that we have our master plan finished and simply have to deal with the procedural issues. Not so. Welfare reform is a dynamic process that must evolve and continually be reinvented based upon the effectiveness of the present program, as well as the social and economic climate of the times.

We have all done an excellent job in the development of FAIM. This is an enormous stride in the right direction. But we must continue our journey by recognizing and addressing social and programmatic issues that exacerbate poverty in America.

One such issue is the increasing number of out-of-wedlock births. I think it is obvious to all of us how single-parent families experience heightened stress, demands, and hardships on family members. Single-parent families also present a greater demand for social service programs.

How serious is the problem? Let me attempt to answer this using 1992 data.

Approximately 26.4% of all Montana births were to single mothers. Compare this to 12.5% in 1980. And 8.4% of the births were to single teenagers. If we just look at ages 15-17, 88% of all births in Montana were out of wedlock. Compare this to 58% in 1980.

National birth data provides some additional relevant information. The birth rate among teenagers in the United States is more than twice the rate of all other industrial nations. (One exception: the U.S. birth rate is "only" 1.9 times the rate in the United Kingdom.) It is interesting to note this occurs in spite of the more generous welfare benefits typical in Europe.

Finally, what about Montana's AFDC population? Nearly 10% of the AFDC population (1,616 out of the total caseload of 16,745) gave birth during calendar year 1993. This translates to 53% of all births to single parents in the state and 14% of all births.

Of the 1,616 births to women receiving AFDC, 409 had received AFDC for 10 or more months when they gave birth. This is 25% of the AFDC population that gave birth and 2.4% of the entire AFDC population.

What does this all mean? The latter data would cast doubt on any real need to pose a family cap on AFDC benefits.

But the balance of this information amply demonstrates a growing social problem that drives the need for many of our poverty programs. The challenge for us now is to accept the challenge to deal with the ever-increasing number of single-parent families and the subsequent increase in the poverty level within our society.

We must develop strategies to decrease the number of out-of-wedlock births and the number of single-parent families, especially among teens. This is the next challenge facing us as we develop comprehensive welfare reform in Montana.

ACF National Welfare Reform Partnership Forum

Kim Brown
Welfare Reform Specialist

This fall, I had the pleasure of traveling to Washington, DC, for the Administration for Children and Families National Welfare Reform Partnership Forum. While there, I not only attended incredibly informative workshops and met welfare reform specialists from around the country, I also had the opportunity to spend time with some of the federal contacts with whom we have been negotiating over the phone for the past year and a half.

Although I could fill our entire newsletter with notes from my trip, I agreed to include only the "highlights".

One of our first speakers was Mark Greenberg from the Center for Law and Social Policy. He listed the ten most common state waiver requests:

1)	Increase earnings disregards	(33)
2)	Increase asset accumulation	(31)
3)	Ease AFDC-UP eligibility	(29)
4)	Increase sanctions for non-compliance	(27)
5)	Work requirements (14) family time limit	(10)
	parent-only time limit	(2)
6)	Expand JOBS participation	(24)
7)	Deny aid for failure to attend school	(24)
8)	Extend/expand Medicaid	(20)
9)	Extend/expand child care	(19)
10)	Family cap	(17)

Montana has received approval to implement numbers 1 through 6.

Later, Donna Pavetti from the Urban Institute spoke about the time she has spent over the past year visiting five sites with welfare reform initiatives. Some of her key findings include:

- Flexibility is extremely important. There must be constant monitoring and adjustment.
- The efforts all require incredible attention to detail.
- These programs shifted their focus from education and training to employment.
- Staff reported culture change was their most difficult task (that is, changing participant attitudes, motivations and behaviors).
- Culture change is especially tough due to the nature of the job (tight deadlines, lots of rules and regulations, etc.). It becomes an added duty.

In a breakout session with speakers from Vermont and Wisconsin, the importance of getting the culture change/employment-focus message across to recipients early and often was stressed. It must be continually reinforced.

A resounding message from nearly every speaker was to **build on people's strengths. Don't focus on "barriers"**.

We had an interesting group discussion about "Effective Work Strategies" based on the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation's evaluation results on "Labor Force Attachment" (LFA) approaches vs. "Human Capital Development" (HCD) approaches. The LFA approach emphasizes getting the participant into any job, even if it isn't a "good" job, because the best place to learn good work habits is at work. If the person **cannot** find a job, then short-term training may be considered. This approach views every participant as "employable", then exposes them to the labor market. Workers don't "assess" the client. Instead, the labor market makes that determination. If the labor market determines the person is not employable, then further assessment can be done.

The HCD approach emphasizes education and training. In this experiment, many folks in the HCD track were involved in Basic Education.

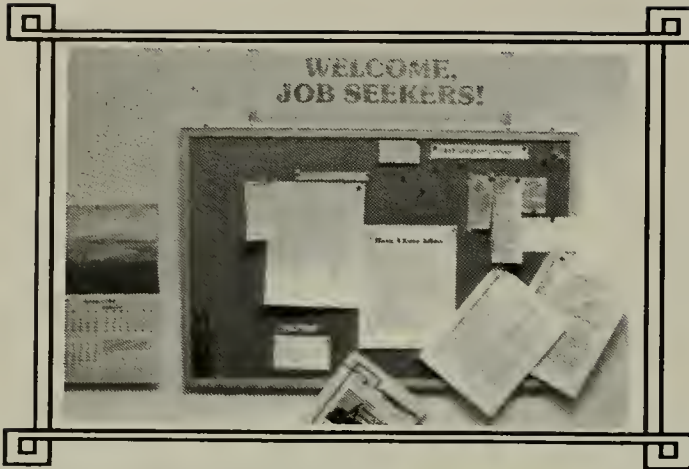
Initial results show higher gains from the LFA approach, though effects from the HCD approach may be expected to take longer to appear. FAIM utilizes the LFA model, as do projects in many other states and national welfare reform bills currently being debated in Congress.

Our closing speaker, Anne C. Adams of the OMTI/National Welfare to Work Institute, described how she believes reform efforts offer an opportunity to "redress the alienation that has developed between clients and their communities." She feels it is extremely important to engage the participants and the community as partners. Frontline workers must also be involved in community development in the neighborhoods where their recipients live.

This was a perfect way to end the conference for me, as I thought about how FAIM offers innumerable opportunities for communities and participants to remedy that alienation and reestablish vital community cohesiveness. Through a united effort, we can not only promote Montanan's values of work, responsibility and family; we can also strengthen our communities for the benefit of us all.



7 Weeks Until FAIM Policy Implementation 01/01/96
11 Weeks Until FAIM Project Begins 02/01/96



Changing the Culture by Changing Office Appearances

The "first impression" participants have of the Wheatland County Office of Human Services is this bulletin board offering job and child care opportunities. Photo by Lynn Rosenberg.

Lynn Rosenberg
FAIM Team Region III Field Rep

When we talk about "changing the culture" of our human services offices, a part of that change is the physical appearance and atmosphere of the office itself. Change is often difficult, but can be made easier if it is a gradual process.

Regardless of your county's FAIM implementation date, you can start changing the culture of your office at any time. You can start by defining what you expect the outcomes of welfare reform to be. *The focus should be on helping participants get and keep jobs.*

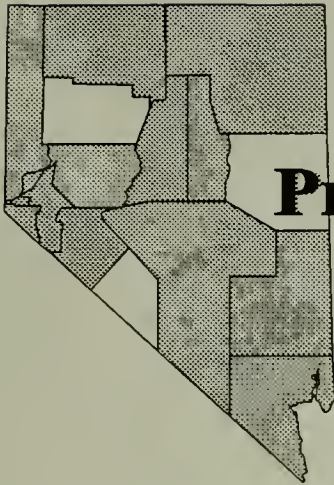
What do participants see when they first enter the waiting room or office? Is it job listings posted on the bulletin board next to listings for child care? Most likely not. It is more probable that it is advertising for a program people might qualify for, or an offering for a service rather than an employment opportunity. If an environment is displayed that promotes putting jobs first, it may motivate participants to do more job search activities.

Here are some ways to start making simple changes in our environment to help clients focus on finding work before welfare:

- Post want ads in the waiting areas.
- Post child care availability in the waiting areas.
- Make job search information, sample job applications, pamphlets, and videos available to participants in waiting areas.
- Waiting areas should be neat and professional looking, just as an employer's office would look.
- Staff should communicate success by actions and dress.

FAIM has redefined the goal and expectations of the human services offices in the state of Montana. In order to make it a successful program, we must begin to communicate to participants what is expected of them. We need to promote self-sufficiency and focus on the values of work, family, and responsibility.

Although changing the physical appearance of our offices seems like a minor detail, that "first impression" can really help staff and participants make the shift in attitude so vital for success.



Public/Private Partnerships Prove Successful for Nevada's Welfare Department

Sue Matthews
County Director/Region I FAIM Team Field Rep

At a recent National Eligibility Worker's Association (NEWA) Training Conference in Las Vegas, I was fortunate enough to: (1) win some money; (2) find out Montana is "way ahead" of most states in implementing welfare reform; (3) learn I should never try playing poker with the professionals (losing only what money I had previously won); and lastly (5) discover an exciting program that has been working extremely well in Nevada, which I feel could hold great potential for Montana (on a smaller scale).

Nevada has developed two similar, but different models of public/private partnerships between its welfare department's employment and training unit (JOBS, JTPA providers, etc.) and the casino industry. The process could easily be duplicated for other businesses, and has already been successfully used in Nevada with Walmart stores.

The first major test of this model, the Employment Outreach Program (EOP), was the opening of the MGM Grand Hotel/Casino. Its management team made a major commitment to hire a significant number of its work force from the EOP training program. MGM also actually hired staff to work with the Nevada state entities in development of assessments, screenings, and training programs. These MGM staff people were integral participants in the early stages, which forged a dynamic partnership. The MGM Grand opened in 1994 and employed a total of 1462 participants from the EOP, 800 of whom were direct welfare recipients. At the end of one year, 600 of the 800 welfare recipients were still employed by them. The program has been extremely successful---the key ingredient appears to be in the working relationships developed by state agencies with private businesses.

The second model, Casino Occupational Referral for Employment (C.O.R.E.), was not as unique as the first. In this model, the state agency itself took more of the lead and did not seem to have the same commitments from the employers. It was and is, however, very successful. When I asked why they had "reinvented the wheel" when the MGM project had been so successful, I was told that what works in Las Vegas doesn't necessarily work in Reno....They definitely have a "north vs. south" geographical difference of philosophy, not unlike our own "What works in western Montana, won't necessarily work in eastern Montana."

In summary, it is apparent that we need to involve the business community in our welfare reform plans. A good start would be acquiring good representation on the Community Advisory Councils (CAC) from your local business sector. Attend any economic development meetings that are held in your communities. Become involved with the Chamber of Commerce, or at a minimum, inform them of FAIM! Local CACs may want to conduct business surveys to determine what area employment needs are and what kind of business partnerships can be forged with our various departments.

If you would like more information about the Nevada models, I have some limited materials available, as well as the names of some key contact people. I can be reached at (406) 232-7800.

COOPERATIVE INVESTING IN FAIM

Mary Lou Remington
Valley/Phillips JOBS Coordinator

In the world of business, there is a term called the "cycle of business". It is nothing new. Nations have for decades endured boom followed by bust, prosperity and then depression, periods of growth and confidence trailing off into a decade of despair. Some images of this throughout our history may be etched into each of our minds—for example, sketches of men in big top hats who wheel and deal in corner wheat markets, play with railroads, and organize steel companies. Fortunes are quickly won and just as quickly lost. Factory gates shut and signs go up saying, "NO HELP WANTED". Soup kitchens appear, and desperate families flee the dust bowl in Model A pickup trucks. Perhaps the stock market crash of 1929 is the most notorious event of fortune turned to human suffering, yet, it is by no means unique.

When the settlement of this western prairie began, farmers and ranchers were considered business people. Settlers wanted the best price for their cotton, corn, cattle, wheat, and hogs. They wanted to maximize production and minimize cost. Railroads and banks concerned them because transportation and interest rates affected their cost of doing business and, consequently, their profit margin. It took a while for the newly-developed prairie to produce a cash crop. But when it did, thousands of new farms began dumping their output on the market. The supply of agricultural commodities increased dramatically. Shortage changed to surplus, and prices dropped. Time after time during the 19th century, commodity prices fell to record lows after a period of inflation and the subsequent land rush.

But as time passed, the cycle would repeat itself. Things really haven't changed. Agriculture's fortunes are still guided by the cycle. Remember the boom of the early 70s? Consumption of beef was up; President Nixon negotiated the wheat deal with Russia; the Peruvian anchovy harvest had failed, and soy beans were used to fill the gap as a protein extender. Agricultural commodity prices doubled, even tripled, and therefore, of course, farm income shot up. As a result, farmers spent the rest of the decade investing heavily in land and equipment. Ultimately, supply outstripped demand, and farm prices deteriorated throughout the early 80s.

We've all seen the result. It's nothing that hasn't happened before—foreclosures, bankruptcies, falling land values, broken families, and ruined lives. Eventually, of course, prices stabilized - until the next cycle came along to start the process all over again.

Business activities always expand and then contract. There are periods when production, employment, and profits surge ahead, each followed by a period when profits and output fall, and unemployment increases. Then the entire process repeats itself once again.

Montana's business owners operate amidst a fluctuating agricultural economy; I imagine they have come up with some creative ways to keep their profits steady. Perhaps one of them is through an avenue of investing. Today, there are numerous investments one can make. However, that process is usually done with a great deal of care and a degree of knowledge about what you are investing in. It invariably comes with an element of risk attached. If you lived in the early 1900s, one investment may have been in the promising fortune of gold. As attractive as that sounds, we are all aware how the bottom dropped out on the gold market, leaving gold seekers, stampedeers, and fortune hunters of those early days virtually penniless.

To counteract some of these investment foes, I would like to present an investment idea to you which may help stabilize your profit margins and lower your chances of financial risk. As opposed to investing money in stocks, bonds, or securities, this type of investing would take on the form of your company investing in a life. This type of investing I will term "cooperative investing."

Cooperative investing would be done in combination with you, the county welfare department, and the JOBS program. It would consist of working with a FAIM participant as a work experience person at your place of business. This person would work a set number of hours at no cost to you. If the individual's work performance was satisfactory to you, you would then have the opportunity to hire this individual on a full or part-time basis. An investment of this kind would help offset some of your business costs, while at the same time help someone start developing job skills, establish a reference base, and build a job history. This type of investment adds not only to your productivity, but adds to the "health and overall well-being" of the family you invest in.

In closing, it is important to recognize that a community effort is needed to combat some of the problems which plague us socially. Teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, crime, domestic violence, poverty, etc. To invest in a life provides the hope for a future and the promise of a better world for our children. If you have ever been afforded the opportunity to become involved with an individual or family that needed your help, you know the feeling of gratification this brings. By affording someone an opportunity to make the change necessary for independence, your investment rewards can be great.

At the investment firm of Dean Witter, their slogan reads, "At Dean Witter, we measure success one investor at a time."

One by one, through this type of cooperative investing, you can provide the means with which to move families from dependency to self-sufficiency. I hope you will seriously consider working with a FAIM or JOBS participant. Thank you, in advance, for your cooperative investment.



BLOCK GRANT LEGISLATION – An Update –



Ed Scheibl
Welfare Reform Specialist

As we move toward the February 1996 FAIM implementation date, close attention is being paid to the evolving national legislation and its potential impact on Montana. Although federal law will have an affect on Montana's welfare reform project, FAIM is moving forward on schedule.

The main focus of the national legislation is the termination of the individual entitlement status of many welfare programs and the creation of block grants to states to administer welfare programs to meet their specific needs.

The House combines AFDC, Emergency Assistance, and JOBS into a single block grant to states. The Senate block grants similar programs, and combines Transitional Child Care, At-Risk Child Care and IV-A Child Care into the single block grant as well. The Senate version also provided for an additional \$3 billion dollars of child care monies over the life of the bill if states maintain their 1994 IV-A child care spending.

Block grants seem inevitable since both chambers have passed such language, but states have vigorously requested that if this is to occur, little or no strings should be attached to the grants. This would allow the states to spend the money in the most appropriate manner. Block grant amounts are to be based on 1994 expenditures. At the time of this writing, the legislation is in Conference Committee. If and when it comes out, the House and Senate will vote on it in its entirety, no changes allowed. If the bill passes both chambers, it will be sent to President Clinton for his signature or veto.

The next FAIM newsletter will feature an updated summary of block grant legislation.

Q and A

Kim Brown
Welfare Reform Specialist

In the course of our daily work, FAIM Team receives numerous questions concerning welfare reform from across the state. As a regular part of the FAIM newsletter, we would like to share those questions and the answers to them with a large audience of readers interested in welfare reform.

(1) **Will the \$3000 resource limit apply to Poverty Child Medicaid?**

** The FAIM \$3000 resource limit applies to all the Poverty- Level Medicaid programs. It also applies to AFDC, AFDC-related Medicaid and Food Stamps. The only two exceptions are Extended Medicaid and Extended Postpartum Medicaid coverage. (We cannot implement a resource limit for these coverage types.)*

(2) **Are Eligibility Specialists the only ones who will receive FAIM training?**

** No, all staff (except for control workers in control counties) will receive FAIM training. This includes Eligibility Assistants and Receptionists. FAIM affects the duties of every worker in our county offices.*

(3) **Do FAIM changes affect our SSI-Medicaid (elderly or disabled) folks who receive Food Stamps?**

** Unless the case is designated control (which can only happen in a control county and which means the case will be processed using current policy), Food Stamp eligibility will be determined using FAIM policy and procedures. FAIM changes also affect the AFDC-related Medicaid-only cases.*

(4) **What is "TRAC"?**

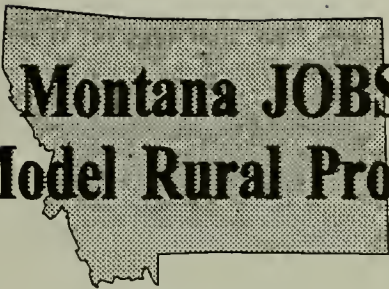
** TRAC is the acronym for "Training, Resources and Career Choices". It refers to the employment and training activities of Pathways participants not being served by the JOBS program. All adult Pathways participants not enrolled in JOBS are considered to be part of TRAC.*

Once again, we would like to thank you for sharing your questions and concerns. Please feel free to write or call our team if you think of other issues needing clarification.

If you have a question you would like to contribute to this column, please submit it to:

FAIM Team
DPHHS/FAD
P. O. Box 4210
Helena, MT 59604





Montana JOBS

A Model Rural Program

Linda Currie
JOBS Specialist

The Montana JOBS (Job Opportunities and Basic Skills) Program has been cited by Region VIII and Region X ACF federal JOBS specialists as a model rural program. Because of Montana's success in meeting the Unemployed Parent participation rates, our Pay after Performance and teen parent programs and our jump on welfare reform, Region X paid the way for JOBS specialists from Alaska and Idaho to visit Montana to learn more about our program. The state of Idaho sent a welfare program specialist, too.

On September 26th, Linda Currie and Linda Snedigar of Montana JOBS welcomed Bonnie Tolman, Field Manager of the Alaska Work Programs; Donna Allen, Program Specialist of Idaho's Family Self-Support Programs, Pam Wiley of Idaho's Welfare Reform Program; Leslie Meriwether, Region X ACF JOBS Specialist; and Karen Knoll, Region VIII ACF JOBS Specialist. For two days, the Montana JOBS personnel hosted the five visitors as they toured the JOBS programs and county welfare offices in Bozeman, Livingston, Billings, and Columbus.

The visitors were impressed with the local county flavor of each site and how local task forces assisted in the development and management of the JOBS Program. Since Idaho and Alaska are just beginning welfare reform, the visits to the county welfare offices offered insights into how Montana is making the culture change from cash entitlement programs to work programs under FAIM.

The visitors went home with new ideas and information about running their JOBS Programs. The Montana JOBS staffers found new contacts readily available to share JOBS strategies and changes.

"New Directions" Training Begins Soon

Michelle Oelfke
Training Specialist

The implementation of FAIM is fast approaching, which means training is just around the corner. FAIM is moving us in a new direction and therefore "New Directions" was chosen as the theme for FAIM training. Training will focus on the cultural change staff will be experiencing, as well as the changes that are occurring in policy and procedure.

There will be three training teams consisting of nine people on each team. The teams will be comprised of central office staff and field staff. They will be known as "Conversion Consultants." All Conversion Consultants met the week of October 23 for a training session. During this time, the final development of the New Directions training took place. The training centered around the FAIM role play video. Lots of time was built in for practice to allow staff to become accustomed to the new approach.

New Directions training will be mandatory for all county staff. Overall, there will be 15 weeks of New Directions training between December 1995 and December 1996. The first training session is scheduled for December 4 - 8 in Helena.

500 Medicaid Recipients Will Participate In First Plastic Card Technology Pilot

Marilyn Carlin
Chief, External Systems Bureau
Operations & Technology Division



Lewis & Clark County is slated to host Montana's first Plastic Card Technology Pilot. Approximately 500 Medicaid Passport recipients will begin using the state's new plastic smart card in lieu of the current paper ID card beginning January 1, 1996. They will participate in an 18-month pilot project designed to test the feasibility, both technically and functionally, of using smart cards.

Montana is one of only a handful of states that have opted to use smart card technology for welfare benefit delivery. A smart card is a credit card-sized plastic card with a computer chip embedded in it. The chip holds information in electronic form that can be easily, securely and accurately accessed to verify eligibility and provide information required for Medicaid claims processing.

Four physician's groups and St. Peter's Hospital will be equipped with card readers which will be used to activate the cards. The cards will contain all of the information that is currently printed on the paper ID card. Information from the card will be downloaded to a file which can in turn be used to populate certain fields on the Medicaid claim form. The provider will not have to manually enter the information thus saving a few key strokes and preventing data input errors.

The Department of Public Health and Human Services will host an open house on November 17 and 18 in the rotunda of the Capitol Building. The purpose of the open house is to provide an educational forum for recipients who will be participating in the pilot. They will learn more about the card including how, when, and where to use it. Photographs for the cards will also be taken at this time.

Future plans include adding functionality to the card. While the pilot will start out as a fairly basic test run of chip technology, once underway, the potential for expanded capability exists. For example, the card could be used to track immunizations, record allergies and patient care histories. Eventually, information relevant to other programs, such as AFDC and Food Stamps, will be added to the card.

For more information about plastic card technology or the open house, please contact me at (406) 444-0012.

Temporary Services Contract Supports FAIM

Susan Ramsey
Project Manager, Child Support Enforcement Division

A contract was recently awarded to Express Personnel Services to provide temporary workers for the Department of Public Health and Human Services. This contractor will be providing these workers throughout the state. The contract was implemented on October 10, 1995 and is effective through June 30, 1996 and is renewable for up to a total of seven years. This contract will be utilized by the entire department for temporary clerical and legal transcription needs.

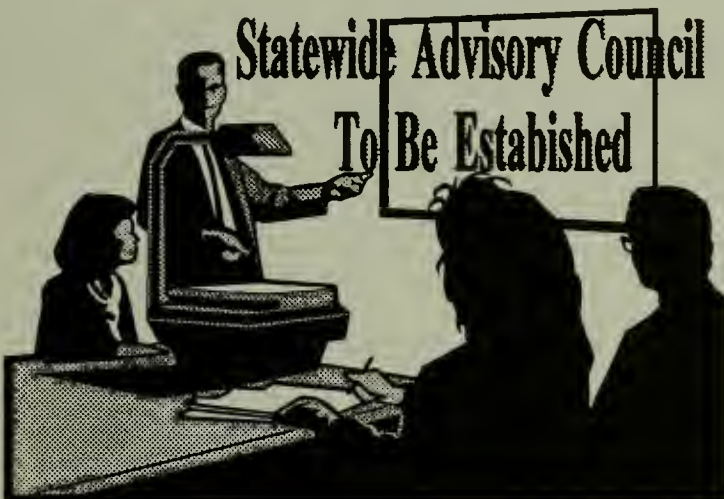
The Request for Proposal (RFP) for this project contained unique language. The RFP encouraged the proposers to hire FAIM participants and points were awarded during the evaluation process based on the plans submitted by the proposers.

Express Personnel Services is committed to hiring FAIM participants and is in the process of implementing the FAIM hiring procedures. Monthly reports will be submitted to DPHHS and a written report will be presented at the end of the contract period.

Peter Blouke, Director of DPHHS, supports the hiring of FAIM participants in department contracts when appropriate.

If you have questions on the FAIM language in this RFP, contact Susan Ramsey, CSED Project Manager, at 444-0924. If you would like to utilize this contract, contact Norine Joyce, DPHHS Management Analyst, at 444-4631. Norine will be tracking this contract for the department and has formulated a procedure to follow. Please contact her before calling Express Personnel Services. If you would like to refer FAIM participants to Express Personnel Services, contact Lynne Johnson, Manager, at 442-7501.

FAIM



Sherri Brandewie
Welfare Reform Specialist

Finalization of the FAIM project is well underway. Local communities, through the establishment of Community Advisory Councils (CACs), are developing community operating plans (COPs) which will address local issues and develop options for various community-related elements of the project.

The Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) recently completed soliciting nominations for membership to a State Advisory Council (SAC), whose charge will be to provide guidance and oversight for certain activities, including COPs operating plans, implemented under FAIM.

The major responsibilities of the SAC include establishing guidelines for acceptable COPs, reviewing each plan, and recommending to CACs ways to improve programs, services, or effectiveness of activities. The SAC will also ensure the COPs will comply with union requirements.

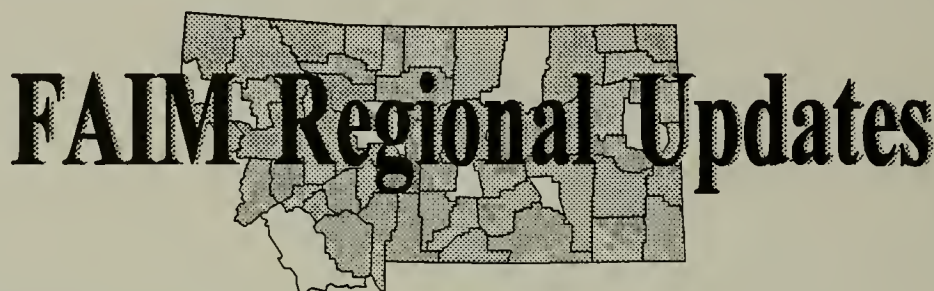
Other major responsibilities of the SAC are oversight of the development and implementation of programs and activities set out in the COPs, coordinating cooperation among local resource providers, neighboring CACs, as well as other state agencies, and making final recommendations regarding COPs approval.

Quarterly reports will identify and share any enterprising or exceptional solutions outlined in other COPs. Annual reports will identify and advise the FAIM Team, in coordination with the COPs, of employment, training, and other community resource needs.

The final composition of the Statewide Advisory Council membership will be established by Dr. Peter Blouke, Director of DPHHS, in consultation with Governor Marc Racicot. Membership will consist of one representative from each of the following areas: office of human services County Director, family

services, housing, FAIM participants, HRDC, County Commissioner, education, Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, tribal (Fort Belknap), child care, union, religion, health, private industry, legislative, and low income advocacy. Family Assistance Division (FAD) will provide technical assistance regarding state and federal requirements.

Members are expected to attend four to six meetings per year and serve as an active member of council committees if necessary. SAC members will have the pleasure of contributing directly to the process of making the FAIM project a successful partnership among service providers, private industry, state agencies, local communities, and FAIM participants.



FAIM Regional Updates

REGION I Linda Nybakken

In February, Valley and Phillips counties officially become FAIM pilot counties. The 41-member Community Resources Task Force and other committees have been diligently working on pre-FAIM activities. Future FAIM Coordinators June Cornell, Rosie Bednarczyk, Pat Hallet, Gay Anderson, and Sue Henderson serve on the task force and as members of the four committees mentioned below. Mary Lou Remington, JOBS Coordinator, serves as a consultant to all the committees.

The Resources Committee has been working on a resource directory, in addition to developing additional resources.

The Supportive Service Committee has decided to conduct a drive to attain coupons for specific donated/needed supportive services.

The Community Resources Committee has identified the perimeters for community worksites for AWEPP and the Community Services Program (CSP).

The Public Relations Committee will work on disseminating posters and informational material to the public.

In September, our offices and the Glasgow Job Service co-hosted an employer luncheon. Jon Meredith and Linda Snedigar from FAD Central Office were guest speakers. Mary Lou Remington encouraged employer involvement in FAIM in her speech, "Cooperative Investing." *(Please refer to Mary Lou's article in this newsletter for more information).*

As a small rural county, we identified the six-month phase-in as a major obstacle to FAIM start-up. We intend to offer some "larger group" classes and activities to develop job readiness. Therefore, we'll need to postpone our start date until June or July to best utilize our dollars.

In preparation for FAIM, our staff feels a combination of excitement and dread. We're excited about the positive changes FAIM offers participants. However, the ever-changing political winds which threaten the reduction of money for training and supportive services concern us. We ask, "Can we continue to do more and more with less and less?"

REGION II Darlene Miller and George Shanley

Pondera, Teton, Toole, and Glacier counties have been approved for an Americorps grant. Terry Button, the JOBS operator in Glacier County, wrote the grant. She will be the Americorps volunteer supervisor. We have hired Katrina Wagner as our Americorps volunteer. She will be based in Glacier County, but will travel to the other three counties. In addition to her Americorps duties, Katrina will identify resources in these communities as well as help establish the Community Service Advisory Councils and community work sites in each area. In preparation for her new position, she attended training sessions in Lewistown sponsored by Americorps in September.



The Cascade County Welfare Reform Advisory Council met mid-October. The main agenda item was the identification of organizations, businesses (both private and public), and governmental agencies that could benefit from placement of Community Services Program (CSP) participants. FAIM's major change in philosophy, vs. the old GRA Community Work Program, results in the inclusion of "volunteer" situations in the placement scenario.

The next issue the council will address is child care. The council believes this will be the "major area of concern" when FAIM is implemented. A requirement of FAIM, as directed through the waiver protocol, is the mandatory availability of child care for any FAIM component agreed to in the Family Investment Agreement (FIA). If we "require" the participant to participate (sanctionable performance), we have to ensure the availability of child care to allow the client to participate. We are currently experiencing a shortage of "certified" child care in the Great Falls area, so we foresee a shortage when FAIM is initiated - unless we take the preparatory steps necessary to "discover" new and innovative child care arrangements now.

One situation already discussed is "co-op" child care. However, this arrangement presents a lot of obstacles that need to be resolved before implementation and acceptance by state day care authorities.

REGION III Lynn Rosenberg

The Fergus County combination is preparing for welfare reform in several ways. The Eligibility Specialists are going through different sections of the FAIM Workbook each month. They are taking quizzes and having a lot of discussion at monthly meetings to become more knowledgeable about FAIM. They are also trying to change the way they do business in the office with the participants. This group feels that if they start preparing themselves and their participants now, the implementation process will be much smoother.

Some counties in Region III are changing the physical appearance of their offices and waiting rooms. It has been a fun process for them---they've started to realize by looking at all of the posters and "offerings" on their walls how they have helped create the dependency participants have on our current welfare system.

The Fergus County combination formed its Community Advisory Council some months ago. They feel they have a good working group that will have a lot to offer locally. A more detailed report will follow in the next issue of the FAIM newsletter.

REGION IV

Juanita Mallo, Mary Kay McGinnis, Jim Fay

Park County Job Service Manager, Al Maurillo, and Park County JOBS Operator, Rie Hargraves, have offered to conduct several workshops for the staffs of Park, Broadwater, and Meagher Counties in preparation for future FAIM Coordinator duties.

They will be giving skills and ability tests. The Eligibility Technicians will be taking each test, then Al and Rie will be helping them score the tests and instructing them how to evaluate the scoring. Al thought this would be an advantage to the Coordinators, as they could explain the testing procedures to participants. When FAIM Coordinators get the results from agencies that will test participants, they will be able to interpret the effect the score may have on the participant's ability to seek work or to make career decisions.

I feel that I am indeed blessed with the team spirit that exists in Park County, and the community's commitment to welfare reform.

• • •

Two exciting community resource activities are taking place in preparation for FAIM in Butte/Silver Bow. First, the local Job Service is helping develop a lab in the Human Services Office where a FAIM participant can use video and software resources to prepare a resume and develop job search leads. The Job Service is also planning to offer regular sessions for job seekers where they could develop leads and learn more about using Job Service resources.

Secondly, Express Services, (a temporary employment service), has shown an interest in developing a relationship with the local Office of Human Services to assess vocational ability and interest of participants who are seeking employment. These participants could receive skill development in areas where there are local job shortages, if their aptitudes indicated a potential existed. Later, they would be placed in jobs where Express Services had a contract. This service would be provided at no cost to the job seeker.

• • •

Beaverhead County is involved with child care, community services, and encouraging businesses to use AWEPP sites. The staff is currently updating its Community Resource Handbook, which provides detailed information on most area human services. The handbook is funded through a consortium of local agencies, including Job Service, JOBS, Norwest Bank, and the Women's Resource Center.

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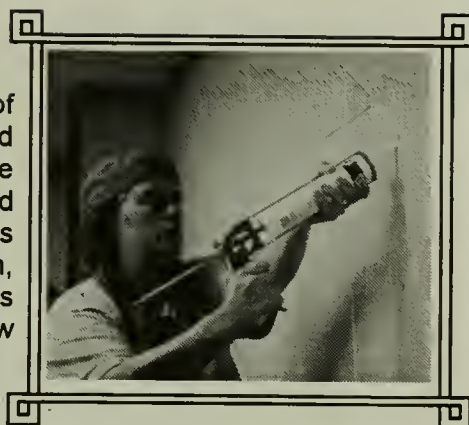
Jefferson County is planning to coordinate community resources with the JOBS Case Managers in preparation for FAIM.

REGION V Lin Smith, Gearing Up Project

Active, two-way partnerships are emerging in Montana's implementation of welfare reform. Counties are taking the lead in developing and implementing FAIM program components by reaching out to local resource agencies to create another level of partnership. Essentially, programs and money will be managed at the community level to best use local resources and "get the biggest bang for the buck," according to Carole Graham, Director of the Missoula County Office of Human Services. Carole wants to see the Missoula program "monitored for its results, not for exactly how we did it."

To prepare for the May 1996 implementation of FAIM in Missoula County, the necessity of separating the existing program participants from those in the pilot projects requires some moving of office walls. Unable to access county resources to accommodate her goal of having a professional-looking office in place by May, Carole looked into other possible solutions.

She heard from Laura Rose, Director of Gearing Up, about a county remodeling project done by JOBS participants who were graduates of the non-traditional job training program for low-income women. Carole then suggested a collaboration between Gearing Up and her own staff. Graduates of the three-week Gearing Up training are assisting with the remodeling effort at the welfare office as a way of gaining additional work-related experience useful in securing a job. The final step in the office renovation will be a joint project between Gearing Up grads and the staff at the welfare office working together to paint the walls. New partnerships on many different levels are the name of the game now.



Valarie Mace, Gearing Up graduate, works on a remodeling project at the Missoula Office of Human Services. Photo by Lin Smith.

Video Excitement

Ed Scheibl
Welfare Reform Specialist

In an attempt to convey the FAIM message to as wide an audience as possible, a variety of videos have been or are being developed.

The first video, An Overview of Montana's Welfare Reform Project, "Families Achieving Independence in Montana" (FAIM), was released this summer. This video describes the philosophical cultural change represented in the new approach to welfare, as well as a brief description of FAIM's components, which include the Job Supplement Program, Pathways Program, and Community Services Program. The video is an excellent medium for introducing individuals or groups unfamiliar with FAIM to Montana's welfare project. Copies of this video are available in all county offices of human service and JOBS offices throughout the state. Contact either office locally if you would like to see the tape.

In early September, Montana's FAIM Project—A Preview of a New Way of Doing Business, was released. This video was developed specifically as a teaching tool for staff. It depicts the interaction between the county office and the FAIM participant. The video spotlights the new approach in the interview process and should not be viewed in terms of acting ability or the specific case scenario, but rather as an example of a new philosophy and approach to welfare. Copies have been sent to all county offices and JOBS offices. Please call your County Director or JOBS office if you wish to view it.

We are in the last stages of developing an orientation video, yet untitled, to be distributed to any and all counties who choose to use it. The video will be much different than existing orientation videos, as it aimed specifically toward helping participants understand the new FAIM philosophy and approach to welfare. An orientation packet containing essential handouts for FAIM participants is also being developed. Some of the material is of a generic nature and will apply to all counties. Specific county information can also be added if there are local resources that might need identification.

Special thanks to the entire FAIM Team as well as Barb Post, Dee Sizeland, Mary Kay McGinnis, Bonnie Schock, and Caren Brandenburg of the Orientation Task Force for all their input and effort in developing this video.

Finally, posters identifying the three FAIM programs and the cultural change have been created by a very talented artist, Kathy Cashell, an Eligibility Specialist in Butte. These posters will be used in Conversion Consultant training and other training down the road. Other posters may also be created for duplication and distribution in the future.



"Pioneers In Welfare Reform"

1995 MEWA Conference In Review

Sue Skinner
Welfare Reform Specialist

The Montana Eligibility Workers Association (MEWA) held its annual conference in Great Falls October 3 - 5. All those who attended agreed the conference was an overwhelming success. The Cascade County Office of Human Services did a wonderful job organizing this event.

Dr. Mary Tyler, Associate Professor of Special Education at East Texas State University, entertained the crowd with her anecdotes about reducing stress and bringing more laughter into our lives. Memorable quotes include, "If you are laughing, it is chemically impossible for stress to be present in your body," and my favorite, "If I can touch you, I can tolerate you."

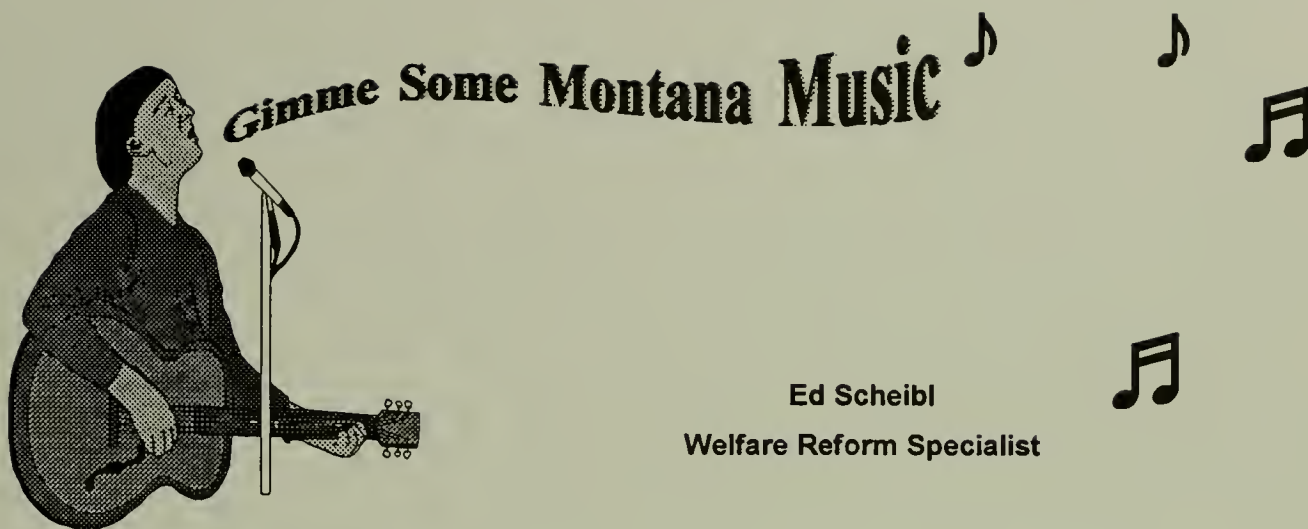
Ronald Merrill, Deputy Director of Income Maintenance at the Department of Public Social Services in Riverside County, California, conducted break-out sessions for attendees. He provided some great ideas about promoting work and creating jobs for AFDC recipients.

Ron also encouraged administration and staff to reduce error rates in eligibility determination, and to place participants into employment. Both actions enhance accountability in office performance. Riverside County has successfully proven that staff incentives and rewards for job placements and low error rates result in millions of dollars in savings for the state and county.

The 24 break-out sessions were well-attended and received great reviews. The FAIM Team presented four sessions incorporating the style of the game show "Jeopardy". The intent was to provide training about FAIM-related issues. Those who attended seemed to learn and have fun at the same time.

Other popular sessions were self-defense training offered by Jerry Lem, and "Welfare to Work" by FAIM Team Region III Field Rep Lynn Rosenberg. The FAIM Team has really benefitted by having Lynn as a member.

The FAIM Project Team would like to thank all presenters on FAIM-related issues. Additionally, thanks to the MEWA Conference Committee for making FAIM a priority at this wonderful event.



Ed Scheibl
Welfare Reform Specialist

Anyone who has seen the FAIM role play video will notice some original music playing in the beginning and closing of the tape. The title of the song is "*Montanans Working*" and it is the product of Terryann McCoy and her brother, Bob Bock. Terry, an Eligibility Supervisor in Missoula, wrote the lyrics and Bob, a Butte resident, composed the music.

The song is an upbeat number and I rate it a "10"; it has a great beat and it's easy to dance to! The music will also be heard in the upcoming, soon-to-be-released orientation video and future video presentations.

Thanks a lot, Terry and Bob. The song is as follows:

MONTANANS WORKING

Montanans working,
Montanans free
Montanans working,
For self-sufficiency.

Montanans working,
For life and liberty
Achieving independence,
What a victory!

See them working,
For their children's future
For independence,
And a new beginning.

And they won't stop,
They'll just keep on trying
With the help that
We are providing.

Montanans working,
Montanans free
Montanans working,
For self-sufficiency.

Montana people
So proud and strong,
Achieving independence
That's where we belong.

And they won't stop,
They'll just keep on trying
Success of family
Is what we're providing.
Montanans working,
Montanans free
Montanans working,
For self-sufficiency.

Montanans working,
For life and liberty
Achieving independence
What a victory!

Lyrics: Terryann McCoy
Melody, Instrumental, Vocal: Robert Bock

RECEIVED

OCT 25 1995

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE
HELENA, MONTANA

October 24, 1995

Desiree Seidlitz 5th grade
P.O. Box 355
White Sulphur Springs, MT 59645

Mark Racicot
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Dear Governor Mark Racicot,

I was so impressed by some of the changes made at the federal level. I think its great that people can't be on welfare any longer then 5 years, so we don't have to pay so much money on taxes.

The second one is that the immigrants won't be on welfare because they are not U.S. citizens,

However there are some changes that I think could be made. I think that the people on welfare should pay back part of the money they received. They would get off welfare quicker then, so they don't have to pay back so much.

The second one I think that needs to be changed is they should do community service, such as, shovel people's sidewalks, clean

people's yards. So thats like getting paid money to help support them selfs while they're on welfare or until they find a job to put food on the table and things like that.

Sincerely Yours,
Desiree Seidlitz

Desiree Seidlitz is in Mrs. Shelley Dempsey's fifth grade reading class at the Roy Swan Elementary School in White Sulphur Springs. Mrs. Dempsey assigned her class of 22 students to write persuasive letters to Montana's legislators after the class read about national welfare reform in the September 29 issue of *Time Magazine for Kids*. The class will be following the progress of welfare reform in Montana and across the country for the rest of the school year.

Three students chose to write to Governor Racicot. They were: Keith O'Neill, Jonathan Novak, and Desiree Seidlitz. All the letters were wonderful and we wish we had space to print each one. We chose Desiree's letter to give our newsletter readers a sampling of the students' welfare reform ideas.

Desiree is 11 years-old and plans to be a veterinarian someday. She enjoys reading, playing Nintendo, and spending time with her dog, T.P. ("Tired Puppy").

---Anastasia Burton

Regional Corrective Action Meetings

Region I	February 1-2, 1996	Miles City
Region II	December 15, 1995	Havre
Region III	November 8, 1995	Hardin
Region IV	November 30, 1995	Livingston
Region V	December 7, 1995	Kalispell

FAIM Newsletter

The FAIM Newsletter is a quarterly publication produced by the FAIM Team in the Family Assistance Division at the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services.

If you would like to contribute an article, or have information you'd like to share, please contact us. We also welcome your questions and/or comments. We can be reached at:

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